

2020 - 2021

Virtual Academy Student Handbook

Virtual Academy Support
Monday – Friday by Appointment Only
Call 225-258-4558 to schedule appointment.

St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy Website:
<https://stjamesparish.geniussis.com>

User Name: _____ Password: _____

The St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy Student Handbook

(Please read this handbook in its entirety, noting carefully added COVID-19 requirements.)

Introduction

The St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy is a program within the St. James Parish Schools District. It is accessible to all registered students within the district. The Virtual Academy is a fully online instructional program indented to be a highly independent, self-motivating work from home program.

This handbook gives general guidance for parents and students enrolled in the St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy. The Virtual Academy is a program and is subject to the rules and regulations of the Louisiana Department of Education and St. James Parish Schools. St. James Parish Virtual Academy follows St. James Parish Schools' calendar for beginning dates, tests dates, and holidays, however, St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy courses end prior to the St. James Parish Schools end date.

St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy's Mission Statement

St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy offers accessible, computer-based, non-traditional learning opportunities for ALL students.

Connect

School, community, athletics, and clubs

Customize

Your learning, your location, your ability

Complete

Grade progression, high school credits, credit recovery

Admission Requirements

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, all Admission Requirements and Guidelines set forth by the St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy are subject to change at any time in accordance with the CDC (Center for Disease Control) guidelines and/or guidelines set for by the State of Louisiana as it pertains to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participating in St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy means that the student:

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- is simultaneously enrolled both in St. James Parish Virtual Academy and your local school in accordance to your geographic attendance zones;
- agrees to actively participate in St. James Parish Virtual Academy online environment; and
- understands that the student must work independently and the student is responsible to complete assignments and tasks.
- understands that it must be the student's original work and only his or her work.

St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy offers Open Enrollment into the Virtual Program in August of the current school year for all students. Students cannot enroll in the Virtual Program later than 2 weeks after the start date of the current school year. Students in grades 9 through 12 have a second option for Open Enrollment in January of the current school year, due to block scheduling in the high schools. Students in grades 9 - 12 cannot enroll in the Virtual Program later than 2 weeks after the first day of grading period 3 of the current school year. St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy reserves the right to deny access to any student. The student will be counseled as to the best program to meet their needs. St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy also reserves the right consider enrollment after Open Enrollment has closed for students who may need access to the Virtual Program due to unforeseen circumstances. This enrollment will be subject to a review process, including but not limited to, review of student grades, discipline records, and attendance records. Upon completion of the review process, both the Home-based School Principal and the Virtual Academy Administrator will approve or deny the request.

Standards of Participation

Each student enrolled in St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy is solely responsible for the content posted through his/her login and account activity. Sharing of usernames and passwords with other students or using other students' usernames and passwords is strictly prohibited.

The following are strictly prohibited:

- posting personally identifiable information in any format other than a private message;
- antagonism or prejudice of any kind with respect to race, religion, gender, intelligence, age, orientation, disability, or socioeconomic status;
- posting material including language, photographs and videos that are inappropriate;
- any criminal or other illegal activity including encouraging the unlawful use, possession, manufacture or distribution of tobacco, drugs, or alcohol;
- illegally posting, distributing, uploading, or downloading copyrighted work (whether music, video, words, images, drawings, pictures, software or otherwise);
- sharing assignments, quizzes, tests, assessments, essays, term papers, questions/answers, or any other action that would violate any code of conduct, expectations or rules in regards to academic honesty;
- spam or unauthorized, unsolicited, commercial promotion; and

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- disruptions of the server or host software.

If a St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy student must take part in instruction via Zoom or Google Class Meet, he or she must be dressed in their home-based school uniform shirt or the approved Virtual Academy t-shirt. During the Zoom or Google Class Meet instruction time the student must be seated in front of a blank wall background, in order to limit distractions.

Failure to comply with these standards may result in temporary or permanent removal of user access to St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy.

Support Lab and Support Lab Expectations

- ***Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, working in the support lab will be allowed by appointment only. Please call 225-258-4558 to schedule an appointment. Appointments will be scheduled in 15-minute intervals. All students working in the support lab will be required to wear a mask and will have their temperature taken upon entry. Parents/guardians must remain in the car until students are cleared for entry into the lab. Parents/guardians must be on time to pick up their child upon completion of the scheduled appointment.***
- All students who bring cell phones in the lab must place them in the designated area while working in the lab. The use of cell phones while students are working in the lab is prohibited.
- All students working in the lab must work on coursework only. Students will not be allowed to watch movies, play online games, or listen to music while working on coursework, *unless the accommodation is documented in a student's 504 plan or IEP.*
- Sleeping in the lab is prohibited.
- Students causing a disturbance of any kind will be instructed to call a parent to come pick them up and will not be allowed to work in the lab for the remainder of the day. If a student continues to cause disturbances in the lab for an extended period of time, that student will be required to work solely from home. The student will only be allowed to work in the lab for monitoring of exams, district tests, and state testing.
- All students working from home are required to work in the lab for all exams, district tests, and state testing. Communication will be sent in advance concerning all exams, district tests, and state testing.

Dress Code

When students report to the Virtual Academy, they must adhere to a certain dress code including the approved Virtual Academy T-Shirt or home-based approved shirt at all times. If a student does not adhere to the proper dress code, he or she will not be allowed to work in the support lab and the parent will be called to pick up the student.

Students must have an approved uniform T-Shirt and is expected to dress appropriately for a school environment. No visible underclothing will be permitted. Pants or shorts are to be worn

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at the waist. Skintight, sleepwear, bike shorts or spandex attire is not acceptable. Closed in shoes must be worn. Flip-flops or slippers are not allowed. As per St. James Parish Schools Dress Code Policy, no hoodies on sweatshirts or jackets are allowed. St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy T-Shirts are available for purchase at the Virtual Lab. The cost of a Virtual Academy T-Shirt is \$15.00.

If a St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy student must take part in instruction via Zoom or Google Class Meet, he or she must be dressed in their home-based school uniform shirt or the approved Virtual Academy t-shirt. During the Zoom or Google Class Meet instruction time the student must be seated in front of a blank wall background, in order to limit distractions.

Cell Phones Policy

Due to the disruption that cell phones create, students are required to power off and turn in to a staff member. Upon leaving, cell phone will be given back to student. The St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy is not responsible for any damage or lost cell phone. If a student refuses to turn in his/her cell phone, they will not be allowed to remain in the support lab and parents/guardians will be called for immediate pickup.

iPad/Laptop Loan

Registered St. James Parish Schools students will be loaned an iPad or laptop by St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy. A technology fee will be paid yearly. This fee is non-refundable. If an additional iPad or laptop is needed for a course, an additional fee will be charged. Additional assistive technology will be provided to students who have a current Individualized Education Plan that requires additional assistive technology. A list of charges that can be incurred for damaged, lost, or stolen iPads or laptops can be found in the District Technology Handbook. If an iPad or laptop is damaged, lost, or stolen, payment is required before a new computer will be issued. Desktop computers are available in the support labs for student use.

Attendance Policy

The Virtual program is designed and intended to be a at home virtual learning environment. Instruction is computer-based; therefore, students can work anywhere there is an Internet connection.

The Virtual program requires that students work in their online courses daily. Student progress will be monitored closely. Although flexibility in choosing instructional times is a huge advantage to the Virtual program, students must maintain their progress in all courses.

Full time virtual students must meet attendance requirements. The Virtual Academy will track absentees daily. A student will be reported to truancy upon receiving excessive absences according to St. James Parish guidelines. Once reported to truancy, a conference will be

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requested and held with the parent and student to determine if the student may need to return to their home-based school. Virtual Academy attendance requirements are as follows:

- Students must work in the program for a minimum of 4 hours (240 minutes) within a 24-hour day (12:00am until 12:00am).
- Students must work a minimum of 5 hours (300 minutes) each week in each course.
- If a student is ahead in **ALL** courses, absentee will not be counted. This is a flexible program, if required pace is kept.
- Because support lab attendance is not mandatory seat-time in the lab does not count toward required hours.
- Students who work in the support lab and choose to watch movies, play games, or become disruptive at anytime while working in the support lab will be required to work solely from home and will only be allowed to come to the support lab for tests and exams.
- While working in the support lab, all expectations of the Virtual Staff must be adhered to by every student. This includes but is not limited to cell phones placed in the designated area upon arrival, computer screens kept on bright at all times, and proper behavior at all times.

Note: If a student cannot work in their course(s), a parent should notify St. James Schools Parish Virtual Academy office either by phone or email. Inactivity can be approved provided that student progress is satisfactory in all courses. Extended periods of inactivity, coupled with unsatisfactory student progress, may be considered grounds for removal from the Virtual Academy and/or a truancy proceeding.

Probation: If a student is behind in his/her course(s) for two consecutive weeks, a mandatory probation meeting will be held. A contract will be discussed and signed with a plan to get the student back on track. If a student does not follow the contract, it will be grounds for immediate dismissal from the Virtual Academy program.

There are certain components of St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy program that require students to come into the St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy support lab. The support lab is a place where students can come to work, and study. The support lab is equipped with an instructional staff that are Louisiana-certified teachers dedicated exclusively to supporting and assisting the students. The support lab is designed to support the students to provide a quiet place to work. If a student chooses to play loud music, games, movies, videos or exhibit disruptive behavior of any kind, the student will be asked to leave the lab and a parent/guardian will be called for immediate pickup. The St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy staff reserves the right to require the student to work at home and only come to lab to be administered exams and test.

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St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy courses are comprised of submitted assignments, quizzes, unit tests, and exams. *Students are required to come into the St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy support lab to take their tests and exams under the supervision of a teacher.* If the student is coming into the lab, the exam needs to coincide with our published office hours. The service of Proctor U may be utilized for test and exam monitoring. There is a fee associated with utilizing the Proctor U service. This fee will be the responsibility of parent/guardian. Fee cost can be provided upon request.

Students and Parents must also attend an initial orientation session in the St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy support lab.

Students are required to come in for district and state-mandated testing. For these mandatory attendance events, timely transportation to and from the St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy support lab must be provided by the parent/guardian. Any student who does not show up to take district and state mandated testing will be immediately dismissed from the Virtual Academy Program and will not be allowed to return to the Virtual Academy Program.

It is our hope that the student will find the virtual environment inviting, supportive, and helpful. Parents and students are welcome to come by during our posted office hours to talk with our teachers and administration, or work on their courses. In addition to the excellent instructional support available through the on-line courses, our local teachers will offer resources for enrichment and preparation for district and state test.

Retakes

A student requesting a retake must notify the Virtual Academy Lab staff. *Retakes will only be allowed if a student is ahead of pace in their course(s) or completed the course.* Only one assignment will be reset at a time. Note, if a student retakes a quiz, assignment, etc. all scores will be averaged to get a final grade for that assignment. No retakes will be allowed after the course closure deadline has passed.

Extension of Courses

If a student needs to extend their timeline beyond the course timeline, a *\$150 charge per course* will be instituted. This will need to be paid 2 weeks prior to the course deadline. This charge is for a two-week extension. Only one extension is allowed per course. A student must have 80% or greater course completion to be eligible to schedule and take their exam. All incomplete assignments and/or exams will be graded as a zero (F). Course credit will be considered after exam completion. If a student needs an extension and does not apply for one prior to the 2 weeks, it can result in failing the course pending on the course completion. The Virtual Academy staff has the ability to waive the fee for certain unforeseen and/or uncontrollable circumstances. Once the course deadline has been reached, the course will not be active anymore.

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Course Re-Take for Credit Recovery

On occasion, re-taking a course for credit recovery is needed. If a student needs to re-take a course for credit recovery more than twice, there will be a \$500 charge to the student for the third attempt. This applies for full virtual students, blended students, and any student needing a 5th block to fulfill graduation requirements.

Deadlines

**NOTE: Due to grade procedures and state mandated test, all virtual courses will end prior to the St. James Parish Schools end date. Course end dates can be found in the on-line system.*

Withdrawal or Dormant from a Virtual Course

If a student requests to drop a course within the first four weeks, a \$200 drop fee will be instituted. After this time period, if a student does not complete a course or a course remains dormant (less than 80%) the student may be required to reimburse the district the full price for the course, receive an "F" in the course, and/or not be allowed to take any further virtual courses.

Integrity in Scored Assignments and Assessments

A great strength of virtual instruction is the abundance of assistance available to the student. *We encourage help from family, friends, online teachers, our own staff, etc. However, when an assignment is scored, we expect the work to be the student's alone so that the score is meaningful.* Scored assignments and assessments are important because they give us information about student progress and the effectiveness of instruction.

All scored assignments and assessments are to be the student's original work, whether completed at home or in our lab.

Students will:

- complete assignments and/or assessments alone;
- not copy or redistribute any part of the assignments and/or assessments in any way – electronically, verbally, or on paper;
- take the assessments without any aids – meaning you may not use textbooks, references, or other materials (printed or electronic) – unless your teacher or the specific assessment otherwise instructs you to;
- be allowed to use their own personal notes to take quizzes, tests, and exams (no screen shots or previous quizzes/tests);
- not log in to a second course or open course related materials on another browser on another computer; and

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- not confer with others (students, family members, teachers, or acquaintances) either in person or through electronic communication, during assessments.
- not give or receive help or assistance while working on quizzes, tests, exams, or graded assignments.

To ensure integrity, unit tests and exams will be proctored to protect integrity and test confidentiality. Consequences for failure to meet the Academic Integrity Policy are as follows:

1st OFFENSE: The student will be counseled at school level with parent/guardian. The student will be given a second chance to complete assignment.

2nd OFFENSE: The student will be counseled at school level with parent/guardian. Disciplinary actions may result. An alternative assignment will be given.

3rd OFFENSE: The student will be counseled at school level with parent/guardian. Disciplinary actions will result. The student will be given a zero on assignment.

4th OFFENSE (for virtual courses): The student will be counseled at school level with parent/guardian. Disciplinary actions will result. The student will be given a zero on assignment. The student is no longer eligible for enrollment in any virtual courses.

Exams and Tests

Midterms and final exams are to be taken in the St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy lab under teacher supervision. Exams are scheduled by the student with their online teacher and Virtual Academy teacher/facilitator by appointment, in order to accommodate everyone and to protect test confidentiality. *Students may not use any screenshots, notes, or aides while taking any mid-terms or final exams, unless the accommodation is documented in a student's 504 plan or IEP.* Note, midterm exams must be taken no later than 2-weeks after the midterm date according to the published St. James Parish Schools Academic Calendar and final exams must be taken upon completion of coursework, prior to the assigned course end date. If a student fails to take his/her midterm and/or final exam according to the designated time frame, he/she will receive a score of zero on the exam. No retakes of exams will be allowed, unless authorized by administration. Students can utilize the service of Proctor U for test and exam monitoring. Please be reminded, there is a fee associated with utilizing the Proctor U service for exams and this cost is must be paid the parent/guardian.

Notification of Grades and Student Progress

Parents and students are able to review grades and percent completion of courses at all times using the students' online course dashboard. Weekly, the Virtual Academy will send a progress report via email. Therefore, the St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy staff will not print and mail parish reports. Printed copies of progress reports require a formal request in writing. Only the final course grades will be provided.

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Grade Determination

Final grades will be determined based on the 100-point scoring. Grading will follow the St. James Parish Schools Grading Scale and Policies:

A =	100 – 93
B =	92 - 85
C =	84 - 75
D =	74 - 67
F =	66 - 0

Final Grades

Final Grades will be maintained in the St. James Parish Schools student information system.

Grade Promotion and Awarding Credit

Course credit will be given to a student who earns an “A, B, C or D.” If a student earns a failing grade of an “F” in any course he/she will not receive credit for the course.

Graduation and Other Programs

Any student wishing to participate in closing ceremonies (graduation, pinning, etc.) with their home-based school must complete all course work by the predetermined Virtual Academy end date. All additional requirements set forth by the St. James Parish School Board and the State of Louisiana must be met. No extension will be granted to any student wishing to participate in closing ceremonies (graduation, pinning, etc.) with their home-based school.

Academic Awards

Because of the flexible nature of online virtual instruction, it is not practical to have honor roll designations until courses are fully completed. Home-based schools will use the final grades to determine honor roll and End of Year Scholars.

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Special Education

Special Education Services are available to students identified with a disability. This program is considered an Inclusion Program. The student's home is the "regular" classroom. Services are provided by phone, email and online. Services offered may include: adaptations and modifications to the general education curriculum, specialized instructional strategies, and adjustments in pacing. To receive other related services, a student must come into one of the Virtual Academy labs at a time agreed upon by the parent/guardian and the special education teacher

**NOTE: When registering a student with the St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy, notification of a student's special education/504 services received at their home-based school must be provided.*

504 Students

504 services are available to students with Individual Assistance Plans (IAP). Services are provided by phone, email and online. Services offered may include accommodations. To receive other related services, a student must come into one of the Virtual Academy labs at a time agreed upon by the parent/guardian and the special education teacher

**NOTE: When registering a student with the St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy, notification of a student's special education/504 services received at their home-based school must be provided.*

School Communications

It is the goal of St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy to foster a sense of connection for our families during the school year. In an effort to help families connect to their child's learning, you will receive information about your child's progress and important announcements by web-messenger as well as via email.

Clubs and Athletics

Since St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy is an extension of the local school, students are allowed to participate in all clubs and athletics offered at the local schools. Students who wish to participate in clubs and athletics must contact their home base school. The Virtual Academy will try to pass on information from the home base school that we received from them.

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St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy Student Handbook Statement of Compliance 2020-2021

The undersigned student and undersigned parent/guardian do hereby acknowledge that they agree to adhere to the Virtual Class Handbook.

I, _____, have read, understand, and will follow the contents of the
(print student name)
St. James Parish Schools Virtual Academy Student Handbook.

Signature of Student

Date

I, _____, parent/guardian of _____, have read,
(print parent/guardian name) (print student name)
understand, and support my student in following the contents of the St. James Parish Schools
Virtual Academy Student Handbook.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date